



Cincinnati Park Board

MEDIA RELEASE



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WHAT: Park Board Approves Cincinnati Riverfront Park in The Banks Agreement

The Board of Park Commissioners held a special meeting this morning to consider the proposed Banks development agreement, which includes developing a 40-acre park downtown on the banks of the Ohio River. In his recommendation to approve the agreement, Park Director Willie F. Carden, Jr. stated, "The proposed agreement reflects that we have been successful in preserving the Park Board's vision of Cincinnati Riverfront Park as a world-class park, a vibrant and beautiful greenspace along the river that is a fitting heritage that will benefit our city for many generations."

The Park Commissioners present, after some discussion, voted unanimously to approve the City/County Banks development agreement, which includes provisions for the development to pay for a portion of the costs of maintenance for the proposed park. The commissioners cautioned that sufficient financing must be included to cover the entire cost of maintaining Cincinnati Riverfront Park, once it is built. Said **Mrs. Marian Lindberg, President of the Park Board**, "Cincinnati Riverfront Park will be a destination landmark for this City, but will only endure as long as City leaders adequately fund its care and maintenance." Mrs. Lindberg continued, "I wish to acknowledge the outstanding efforts of the professional staff team at Cincinnati Parks, who have skillfully guided the project ever since planning for the park first began in 1997. Also, I want to thank the community for embracing this park, because it will require a mix of government and private funding to build a truly remarkable riverfront park." **Mr. Roscoe Fultz, Vice President of the Park Board** shared, "Overall I am pleased with the agreement. My concern is that City Council promises to provide funding to ensure that the new Park be maintained to our standards of being a clean, safe, reliable and beautiful greenspace."

Park Commissioner Otto Budig, Jr. expressed specific concerns: "While the agreement addresses a Common Area Maintenance (CAM) charge assessed on the property developed within the Banks, I am concerned that it will only support 25-28% of the anticipated annual maintenance costs. We must have adequate funds to manage this premium park facility, but the agreement suggests that the remaining fiscal needs will be covered by the City; and in light of the budget cuts the City has required of the Park system, in reality those funds may not be available." He continued, "Under those circumstances approval of this agreement is a 'leap of faith' for the Park Board and will only be successful if the City finds the funds that are needed for Park operations." Added **Park Commissioner Merri Gaither Smith**, "We celebrate coming together with the city and county on this vision of an active, livable gateway to the entire region. Cincinnati is a livable city because of its wonderful parks, and yet the City is challenged to adequately finance the parks we currently manage - which reinforces that the agreement must provide sufficient financing so that Cincinnati Riverfront Park can be a legacy of which our community can be proud for years to come."

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CINCINNATI PARKS, "EVERYBODY'S BACKYARD" is rated by citizens as the #1 civilian city service. Park properties constitute over 5,000 acres, which amounts to approximately 10% of the City's total land area. Parklands consist of 5 regional parks, 70 neighborhood parks, 34 natural areas, 5 neighborhood nature centers, 52 playgrounds, 5 parkways, 18 scenic overlooks, over 500 floral beds, 65 miles of hiking & bridle trails and accessible paths, over 80,000 street trees, and public art work and park

architecture in 33 Cincinnati Parks.

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